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ABSTRACT

Sir John Morris was Chancellor of the University of Tasmania. He was also Chairman of the Adult Education Board and the State Library Board. His views on adult education were well in advance of his time. While many viewed adult education as providing a leisure time hobby for those who participated, he saw it as part of the life-long educational process. This view now commands active and widespread support in many parts of the world, and in this country it has been canvassed in major educational reports and particularly in the recent report on Open Tertiary Education. It has significant implications for the role of the University of Tasmania and elsewhere. (Author/KE)

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SIR JOHN MORRIS MEMORIAL LECTURE
1974

THE UNIVERSITY IN TIMES OF CHANGE

by

PROFESSOR ZELMAN COWEN, C.M.G.

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Emeritus Professor Zelman Cowen is now Vice-Chancellor of the University of Queensland. He has had a distinguished career both in the academic world and in law. He was Vice-Chancellor of the University of New England from 1967-69 and he has had appointments at the Universities of Oxford, Harvard and Melbourne.

Professor Cowen has been honoured by several Universities with the degree of LL.D and he received the distinction of C.M.G. in 1968.

He has written many books on law and international affairs and in 1969 he was invited by the Australian Broadcasting Commission to give the Boyer Lectures. These were later published under the title 'The Private Man'.

The lectures given in previous years in Tasmania by Professor Cowen have long been remembered for being thought provoking and dynamic. In a lecture in Hobart in 1972 he stated 'there can be a cultural pollution, just as there may be a physical pollution, a physical threat to the quality of life'. Surely the 'quality of life' is the very essence behind the edifice of a University.

It is an honour to welcome Professor Cowen to give the 14th lecture in memory of the Board's first Chairman, Sir John D. Morris, K.C.M.G., M.A., L.L.B. and the Board is grateful to Professor Cowen for accepting the invitation.

DOUGLAS PAYNE
Director of Adult Education

SIR JOHN MORRIS MEMORIAL LECTURE

delivered by

PROFESSOR ZELMAN COWEN, C.M.G., Q.C., LL.M. (Melb.), M.A., D.C.L. (Oxon.), L.L.D., (Hon.), (Hong Kong, Qld, Melb.), F.A.S.S.A., F.A.C.E.

Monday, November 4 1974, *Hobart*

Tuesday, November 5 1974, *Launceston*

THE UNIVERSITY IN TIMES OF CHANGE

When I first came to Tasmania in 1951, Sir John Morris, for whom this lecture is named, was Chancellor of the University. I was a young Professor of Law at Melbourne and I came to Hobart to attend a ceremony at which Sir John conferred an honorary degree on a visiting Chief Justice of India. I recounted the story when I gave the Turner lecture at the University of Tasmania a few years ago and I shall not repeat it now. Suffice it to say that I came as a porter, carrying academic robes from Melbourne for the honorary graduand and I was treated very civilly. I met Sir John then and talked with him. At that time I established links with the University of Tasmania which have been maintained over many years, and during the first half of the 1950's I saw Sir John on various occasions.

In his all too short life, he made a distinguished career. He came to the Bench and to the high office of Chief Justice at an early age after success in the practice of the law. As Chief Justice he did not confine himself to his Court, but spread his interests wide and with great energy and conspicuous ability he played a leading role in many enterprises.

He was Chairman of the Adult Education Board and the State Library Board, and it is for his work in the former capacity that we specially recognise him tonight. I was keenly interested in and active in adult education for many years and I have taken some part as a lecturer in adult education activities in this State. I do not recall any discussion with Sir John on adult education, but I am told that he had views about it which were well in advance of their time. While many at that time viewed adult education as providing a leisure time hobby for those who participated, he

saw it as part of the life-long educational process. This view now commands active and widespread support in many parts of the world, and in this country it has been canvassed in major educational reports and particularly in the recent report on Open Tertiary Education. It has significant implications for the role of the University.

Sir John became Chancellor of the University in 1944, and he held that office until his death in 1956. His temperament was such that he was a very active Chancellor; he was deeply interested in the affairs and welfare of the University and with the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Hytten, he attended the meeting of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth in 1953 at Cambridge and took the opportunity to visit universities in Europe and the United States.

His last years as Chancellor of the University saw the emergence of problems and difficulties, and these were vexing and disturbing, particularly to a man of his temperament.

When he died in 1956, the Council of the University placed on record its appreciation and estimate of his service to it. It was said that he held office during a period of immense growth and development in the University, for which he was in no small measure responsible. It is the case, however, that he died at a time when the Australian universities were still operating within serious constraints, and particularly financial constraints, which denied them scope for the adequate performance of their roles in the Australian community and in the world of learning and scholarship. This point was made very plainly by the Murray Committee which reported to the Prime Minister not long after Sir John died. When he died, responsibility for higher education in Australia was still in the hands of a few State and one national university; it affected only a small segment of the population and its costs were small. Less than twenty years on, the picture in this country is as described in the opening paragraph of the recent Report of the Commission on Post Secondary Education in Ontario, entitled *The Learning Society*. It says that the contrast today could scarcely be more striking. The present system of post-secondary education is massive, complex and diverse. It involves a sizeable proportion of the nation's youth studying in a broad spectrum of institutions with a myriad of functions. It plays a commanding role in society and consumes a substantial part of the public expenditures. Whereas in Sir John's day post-secondary education was still an activity which attracted comparatively slight public attention, it has become the object of great public commentary. Anxiety, of course, has been greatly increased

by the disturbances which, particularly in the latter 1960's and early 1970's, engulfed many universities in many parts of the world.

Universities, and the whole structure of post-secondary education, have grown enormously in the post-war period, and particularly during the latter fifties and through the burgeoning sixties. The demand for places was intensified by great growth in the age group; the post-war ' baby boom ' made a great impact. But the demand was much more than a reflection of the increase of the age group: it outstripped it many times. The University came to be seen as a principal agency for social rehabilitation and development. In a society of increasing technological and industrial complexity, there was seen to be a simple and direct relationship between the prosperity of the University and the prosperity of society. The University preserved and strengthened the means by which society grew and prospered. Governments, as the Ontario Commissioners put it, became captivated by an alluring ' investment ' view of education. In the United States, in a competitive cold war climate, the Soviet Sputnik pointed urgently to the need to catch up and overtake; education and research must be heavily supported as a principal engine by which primacy could be achieved and assured. Even if this particular catalyst did not loom so large elsewhere, the general thrust was the same. The Murray Committee's report in Australia, the Robbins report in the United Kingdom, these and other plans and blueprints looked to an expansion of educational opportunity in the universities through the injection of massive public resource. The patterns of support and of growth varied: the movement which Martin Trow described in terms of elite to mass to universal education has, not surprisingly, not been uniform, and the extraordinary percentages of the age group in post-secondary institutions in many parts of the United States have not been paralleled elsewhere, and certainly not in Australia.

I have spoken of post-secondary rather than university education. A significant development which has occurred since Sir John Morris' death has been the establishment and rapid growth of other types of institutions. In Australia these are the colleges of advanced education whose role and function were proposed by the *Martin* Committee in the early sixties. In the United States there is a variety of institutions operating alongside the universities, including a massive array of junior and community colleges; in Canada there are colleges of applied arts and technology. These were devised as genuine alternatives, with functions different from those of the universities, open to a wide clientele, and hopefully tied closely to their communities. In Australia there has been a

rapid growth of the colleges of advanced education both in numbers and in functions. Originally seen as having a distinctively vocational and technological emphasis, and seen as such by Sir Robert Menzies as Prime Minister, they have multiplied and proliferated their activities. In its 1966 report, the Committee responsible for the colleges said that they should aim to provide a range of education of a standard of excellence and a richness of content at least equal to that of any sector of education; that while universities were expected to be custodians of excellence in academic matters and leaders in discovery, colleges and their staffs would be expected to take the initiative in the no-less mentally exacting tasks of applying knowledge. As the colleges have developed their programmes, I have to say with my colleague Bruce Williams of Sydney that a viable philosophy of fundamental differences as between universities and colleges is not readily apparent in this statement and in practice, and we may well have binary arrangements for, rather than a binary system of post-secondary education.

It is not surprising that a diversity of student aspirations and of educational programmes should require a diversity of institutions. Within the universities, the liberal arts curriculum very early gave way to one which embraced professional and vocational functions. The multiversity grew apace during the latter fifties and early sixties. So too, the non-university institutions which I have described were designed to cater for other and diverse needs. In some places—within the United States—post-secondary institutions are being organised within systems. The State University of New York has recently been described by its Chancellor as comprehending 72 institutions serving some hundreds of thousands of students. These institutions include bridging and educational opportunity centres, urban centres to provide transition and remedial work, community colleges, agricultural and technical colleges, liberal arts colleges and university centres that offer research and study through the doctorate, and the medical and professional schools.

In Australia we have moved no great distance towards systematization in this sense. In New South Wales, in recent years, a Board was constituted to exercise oversight over the whole post-secondary structure, and there have been some suggestions that Australia-wide co-ordination would be desirable. The Australian Government in assuming financial responsibility over the whole field of post-secondary education has so far taken no such action, and the most recent committee to report, the Committee on Open Tertiary Education has recommended the establishment of yet another separate body, the National Institute

for Open Tertiary Education. In the present situation there are areas of overlap and, as it seems to me, unnecessary and wasteful duplication and no effective means of dealing with this. Inevitably, with a burgeoning cost problem, the national government responsible for the financing of this whole area will have to turn its attention to the matter of systematization.

To retrace steps, I have spoken of an atmosphere in which support for the universities was seen as an expression of a direct relationship of University prosperity and the prosperity of society. As new professions were born, as others, like business administration and social work became more formally professional, the university became the chief port of entry for those professions, and in fact a profession *gained* its identity by making the university the port of entry. Moreover, this view of the university commanded the support of its students, at least for the first decade of this period of great growth. In an earlier age of depression in the 1930's, the small body of students in the universities had not seriously criticized their structures, purposes and organisation. They looked outwards from the University in making their criticisms of an ailing society. The economic and social climate of the 1950's was quite different but there was little criticism of the University which provided the means by which its students acquired a functional hunting licence for a larger share of the community's wealth and a more favoured place in its pecking order. By and large, I think that this was how students saw the situation. As Dr Claude Bissell put it, students were not thought to be interested in the University as an institution. They were privileged recipients who concentrated on the techniques and strategies of absorbing knowledge and in their spare time attended to their social and athletic life. The university was a hierarchical institution preserved by civility, a sense of deference and a lively expectation of favours to come. So it was too that the structures of university government were not seriously questioned by students or by staff. In its report in the early sixties, the United Kingdom Robbins Report assumed the continuance of a predominantly professional role in the academic governance of the university. There was little in the report which was concerned with the role of the student in university governance. Up to the early sixties, he was seen and generally saw himself as in *statu pupillari*. Samuel Huntington expressed it well and eloquently when he described his university, Harvard, in these terms. ' There was a shared consensus ', he wrote, ' on what was important and what was not important, on what the standards of achievement were and how one ranked individuals in terms of those standards. Intellectual distinction and scholarly achievement was

what counted, and with this general consensus in values there was also a general acceptance of the system for measuring achievement of those values on the part of both students and faculty.' The Robbins Committee confidently defined the role of the university as including the transmission of a common culture and common standards of civilization.

So it was that the university grew in many places, including this country. Growth was more rapid, more luxurious in some places than others, and the American experience of growth was conspicuously the most luxurious and luxuriant. Clark Kerr has given currency to the word multiversity, and he described the university-multiversity as embraced and led down the garden path by its environmental suitors. The growth was supported by an underlying consensus on a set of values that were seen as justifying the co-existence of quite diverse educational enterprises. These were the distinguishing values of the multiversity: a general acceptance and tolerance of the broadest range of functions and services, and a very flexible set of governmental values which did not interfere with any educational programmes and provided a very substantial measure of autonomy for organisational elements, chiefly the departments, but which also included research centres, schools and so forth. The whole was tied together by a complex set of procedures, which were both collegial and bureaucratic, but which appeared to achieve the required degree of co-ordination of a wide range of diverse activities and people, and maintained the necessary control over expenditures and records while preserving for the teaching and research units a very high degree of freedom and autonomy. While these procedures were very often irritating, slow, cumbersome and defective in many respects, they gained the acquiescence of most of the participants in the institutions and, what is also of major importance, the basic assumption was that the procedures themselves could be modified by regular and generally accepted procedures.

I do not know how clear this statement is to those who have not made their lives in growing universities over these years, but I believe that it will readily be understood—now as a matter of history—by those who lived and worked in them. Prosperity and growth gave rise to problems which have been identified and described by able and perceptive writers. Lord Ashby spoke of the development, in an American context, of 'brontosaurian cumbrousness', while Clark Kerr drew attention to other aspects of the development of the multiversity. With vast growth and with rapidly expanding knowledge and technology, all sorts of activities and undertakings were encompassed and assumed by the University: in many, research and the pursuit

and recruitment of eminent researchers emerged as a prime and spectacular activity, often overshadowing the teaching of undergraduates. Beneath the facade of coherence and consensus, universities suffered a loss of intellectual and communal identity, a loss which, as he said, 'in large measure . . . can be attributed to the overwhelming predominance of things that are new over things that are old . . . Knowledge is now in so many bits and pieces and administration so distant that faculty members are increasingly figures in a lonely crowd, intellectually and institutionally.' There were competing loyalties— competing, that is, with loyalty to the institution—loyalties to the discipline, either nationally or world wide; loyalties complicated by relationships with foundations, research commitments, consultancies and by involvement in governmental assignments.

I have referred to the overshadowing of the teaching of undergraduates, and it has been said that student discontent had its beginnings in the impatience of students with instructors who regard their teaching as a second rate activity and an obstacle to research. It was not the case that in the growth of universities, the teaching function suffered eclipse. There was much good teaching in many institutions, including very large institutions. There was, however, the complication of rival attractions: research, administration, involvement of the professor in a multitude of activities which took him away from his classroom, and this was further complicated by growth and complexity. Clark Kerr spoke of the need to improve undergraduate teaching. 'It will require (he said) the solution of many sub-problems; how to give adequate recognition to the teaching skill as well as to the research interests of the teacher; how to prepare the generalist as well as the specialist in an age of specialization looking for better generalization. How to treat the individual student as a unique human being in the mass student body; how to make the university seem smaller even as it grows larger; how to establish a range of contact between faculty and students broader than the one-way route across the lectern or through the television screen; how to raise educational policy again to the forefront of faculty concerns.'

It is a matter of great perplexity to me that the raising of this question rouses such great passions in the university. An argument about the importance of the teaching function for the most eminent as well as the most junior teacher too often raises the charge that this diminishes the importance of the research function of the University. It would seem obvious that research and teaching within the university should enrich one another, that both are university responsibilities of the highest order, that they do

not call in the university context for an order of precedence but rather for an affirmation of the great importance of both. The greatest scholar is more likely to assure the ends of scholarship by kindling enthusiasm through communication with the young undergraduate.

II

Sir John Morris died just as the great period of growth in universities and in post-secondary education got under way. Had he lived for the greater part of another decade, he would have witnessed and would, no doubt, have been deeply involved in the complex problems associated with rapid and confident growth. Within the last few years, however, and particularly since the second half of the decade of the sixties we have seen significant changes which have affected the lives of universities. In a symposium on universities published late in the sixties it was said that a book written about higher education early in that decade could not be printed at its end without major alterations. That later time was a crisis period for many universities. It has been called a period of undirected revolution, one in which there was acute consciousness of the volcanic eruption of student power. Earlier unquestioned assumptions and beliefs now became quite uncertain. As I have already said, the Robbins report defined the role of the university as including the transmission of a common culture and common standards of civilization and there were few at that time who voiced dissent. In 1972, the Grimond report on the University of Birmingham took these words of Robbins and proposed a substantial reframing, observing that they gave expression to a doubtful philosophy at a time when, all over the world, social notions were in a state of rapid and explosive change. In effect this questioned the assumption of the existence of a common culture and common standards of civilization. In 1972, the *Ontario Report* said that the world of that year already seemed considerably removed from that of 1969. Violence, disorder and tumult in the university had abated. The report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education on *Governance in Higher Education* (1973), reviewing the American situation, said that while the immediate crisis and pressures of the late sixties and first years of the seventies appeared to have abated, there was an urgent need to come to grips with problems of university governance. It said that we might well look forward to a period of continuing conflict and tension within universities and institutions of higher education and that while the great issues of a few years earlier had focussed on the students and

their role and demands, the major problems of the seventies might have as their primary focus the role of the faculty, using that word to encompass the whole academic body of teachers and instructors. This report also highlighted and discussed at length issues of university autonomy: the relationship of the university with government in a world in which higher education, by reason of cost and other factors, loomed so much larger in public concern. Within the last few weeks, the Annan Report on the *University in Essex* makes it clear that student protest, if less general in its spread, has certainly not gone away and has severely disrupted that university. The case of Essex is a very disturbing one and it does not stand alone either in the United Kingdom or outside it. In recent years we have seen a new manifestation of activism in the denial of a forum either through tumult or violence or both in United Kingdom universities to speakers propounding points of view unacceptable to [illegible]sters. On issues affecting race this is the official policy of the United Kingdom National Union of Students.

The problems which universities have faced over much of the last decade dominate the massive literature which has appeared in a variety of forms: special reports, symposia, books and articles over this period. The Ontario Commissioners have put it that for the first time in a long while, and perhaps for the first time ever—definitely for the first time in the memory of all living—the very foundations of our education and especially of our educational structure are being questioned. It may be that it is not even the questions themselves that are new; what is new rather is the earnest sense in which they are being asked. It is certainly not the case that student unrest and protest have made their first appearance in these last years; it is the case that our technology makes the world a global village in the sense that a disturbance anywhere else in the world may be made almost simultaneously visible anywhere else, and this gives unrest and disorder an aspect of pervasiveness. It encourages repetition and imitation. It is the case that never in the past has an older generation been so disconcerted by the onslaught of the young. This may be explained in part anyway, by the fact that previously the older generation was more certain of its position, its traditions and values, and less disposed to listen to the complaints of rebellious youth, whereas today's generation of parents, teachers, citizens, feels itself in no comparable position of certainty.

University disorders are but one manifestation of protest in the wider community. The obligation to obey the law is under insistent questioning and so too are many other things.

Running through the writings, the discussions and the reports of these last years, are themes of crisis. The Canadian scholar, Northrop Frye, put it that during the sixties and particularly the second half of the decade we moved into a period of almost continual hysteria in our world and our universities. There was a shattering of consensus on goals, on governance, on values and, as Martin Trow expressed it, a ' complete collapse of any generally shared conception of what students ought to learn '. In a detailed and perceptive study of the Columbia University crisis of 1968, it was pointed out that older and hitherto unchallenged structures of university government proved themselves to be manifestly incapable of dealing with massive and unanticipated pressures and threats and that this demonstrated the need to devise structures which would anticipate and not trail events. The problems of dealing with such pressures and threats are formidable enough when the authority of the State with all its protective apparatus is challenged, and political leaders in such crisis often behave with great uncertainty. If so, it is not surprising that a university, resting upon a fragile consensus and with the most inadequate machinery to contain crisis and to deal with breaches of its rules should at times find its problems appallingly difficult. These problems are compounded by the publicity given to disorder; disorder feeds on it, and the glare of publicity is not calculated to produce rational and well balanced action on the part of anybody.

There has been a profound change in life styles. Lionel Trilling has spoken recently of a growing intellectual recessiveness in university faculties, of a reluctance to formulate any coherent theory of higher education, to discover what its basic purposes are and to realise them through the curriculum. He speaks in a disturbing phrase of a complex tendency in contemporary culture to impugn and devalue the very concept of mind. In the university context we read and hear of the retreat from critical rationality, of an emphasis on spontaneous unstructured self expression, of the value of judgment based on surges of unexamined emotional commitment. There is little belief in the permanence and continuity of social institutions as something which civilize man; there is a romantic utopianism, an assertion of the values of the impulse life as against what is seen as bare cognition and as large hypocritical moral codes. The values of the achievement society are rejected; Richard Hoggart has put that we may be witnessing the beginning of the end for the Protestant ethic in its two main aspects: its attitudes to competitive work and to the sexual life. There is revolt against worldly success and in many places in the university a wide-ranging and passionate reassertion of egalitarianism, manifest in attacks on meritocratic systems. This

challenges the examination system and the certification role of the university. There is an emphasis on equality and on cohesiveness and togetherness, unimpaired by the divisiveness inherent in meritocratic systems which pit persons against each other in competition, and mark out and identify elites. There is an exception to this which is perhaps not surprising: it is support for policies of *reverse* discrimination to assure university places to those who fall into one or another category of underprivilege.

It is expressed too in a rejection of a role *in loco parentis* for the university. There was a time not long ago when the university assumed a paternalistic role and this was reflected in the scope of disciplinary codes. This has come under insistent challenge, and universities have been forced to consider and redefine their roles *in loco parentis* and it has been repeatedly stated, as in the words of the Ontario Commission that 'the time has come for all vestiges of *in loco parentis* or guardianship rules (on the part of the university) to be abolished'. I agree with this.

This carries with it consequences for university discipline. Issues of discipline have inevitably loomed large in the disorders of these last years: original issues have in fact been swallowed up in the disputes over the disciplinary action taken in consequence. The excellent Oxford *Hart Report* on *Relations with Junior Members* put it that 'punishments are not to be multiplied beyond necessity' and I strongly support that view. My own position is simply stated if not so simply applied in particular cases: it is that university discipline is concerned with one central issue: whether the transgressor should be excluded from the university society because of conduct which raises the question of his fitness to remain a member of that society. If a penalty of a fine is imposed, it is simply because the act is of a character not sufficiently gross to warrant exclusion, but not sufficiently trivial to justify disregard and inaction. For the rest wrongful acts should be dealt with by the ordinary courts applying the law of the land, the criminal law. I also say again, as I have said many times, that any notion that the campus is an asylum, an Alsatia, in which the general law does not run, in its generality, is both wrong and pernicious. The university, perhaps above all institutions, cannot sustain a claim to be immune from the law. It is a different thing to say that police should be called lightly to a campus; that shows a great deal of ignorance of how universities live and work, and the judgment on circumstances and timing may be a difficult one. The orderly operation of the university must be maintained and to fail to assert disciplinary authority over those students who deny or obstruct orderly operation is to deny the possibility of effective governance of the university. Lord

Annan in his report on the *Essex* disorders supported the Vice-Chancellor in his decision to take disciplinary proceedings. He pointed however, to the problems which face university authorities in such a case. The proceedings take a very long time and they may lead to further disorders. The problems which face university authorities are not readily understood by a public whose source of information is prominent media coverage: they cannot easily understand why simple, speedy and decisive action to sever the connection of wrong-doer and university cannot be taken forthwith. The reasons are simple: that the fragile consensus which adds up to authority on the campus will be shattered, that procedures must be followed, and it is often overlooked that there is already abundant evidence in the industrial area of the difficulty of enforcing the law in face of widespread opposition to its enforcement. This is not said to justify: it simply explains the massive difficulties with which university authorities can be confronted in a profoundly changed world, in which there is a growing disregard for the authority of the law, a disregard which, as I have said, pervades the whole community.

Among the central problems of contemporary universities are those of governance. I have already referred to the Robbins report which little more than a decade ago assumed the continuance of professorial senior academic authority in the academic governance of the university. What has emerged in the course of the years since then is an increasing demand for this to be spread more widely. It has been argued, successfully in many places, that the bases of university academic councils should be broadened to include a much wider range of academic grades; within the departments consultation by the head of department with members of the department may be, and is, prescribed by university law, and departmental headships on a rotating and short term basis are open to academics of less senior rank. What is now opening up is a demand on the part of untenured junior academic staff for a greater voice and this may be one of the difficult issues of our time. The Carnegie Commission says that the 'seventies may well be the decade of the faculty' and that the locus of activism is shifting to the faculty.

One significant development making its appearance, particularly in the United States, where it is strongest in post-secondary institutions which are not established universities, is the growth of unionism and collective bargaining. Hitherto the faculty, whatever quarrels have embroiled it internally, has pressed for a *collegial* view of the university, for co-management in areas of academic concern. Where there is resort to collective bargaining and the ambit of the claim is broad, it would seem that there is

a posture quite antithetical to co-determination. Moreover, since the claims often have a significant fiscal impact, the paymaster is involved and the consequence is that in the negotiations, government as paymaster becomes an important party at the bargaining table and this may have a significant and, it could be, an enduring impact on university autonomy. The Carnegie Commission in its thoughtful review of developments in collective bargaining points out that it may well supplant co-determination in an irreversible process. The Commission expresses particular concern at collective bargains which reach into academic affairs, and counsels restraint and a study of the implications which may be serious for the maintenance of a substantial degree of university autonomy.

Much has been written and spoken about student participation in university governance. It has been discussed in so many reports and papers; it was one of the great issues of the latter sixties. Earlier than that, in the mid fifties a conference of European rectors and vice-chancellors of European universities had recommended that students should be consulted and accorded some measure of initiative in all questions relating to their welfare and their social life within the university and had expressed the hope that academic authorities whose right it was to make decisions about the curriculum should seek ways of making it possible for students to make known their point of view on these matters. Little more than a decade later, the joint statement of the United Kingdom Vice-Chancellors and Principals and the National Union of Students committed the heads of institutions of higher learning to take into account students' views on curriculum, courses, teaching methods, major organisational matters affecting the planning and development of the University while reserving the power of decision to the statutorily responsible bodies. It also committed the signatories to take into account the view of students on the general principles involved in decisions regarding appointments and promotions, admissions and assessment, though it was said that student membership on bodies concerned with such matters was inappropriate.

That students in the sixties should have pressed their case for a larger voice in university affairs is not surprising having regard to the massive increases in their numbers, to the shifting interests of faculty and to the growing complexity of universities. Generally there has been a significant growth of political concern and involvement on the part of students and the operations of the media have accentuated this. Moreover the political processes have given them a voting voice at an earlier age in general political affairs and this inevitably affects their stance in relation to university matters. To what extent their role should be that of

participation in the work of university at various levels and to what extent the role should be consultation without direct participation has also been much debated—I draw attention for example to the debate between Lord Ashby and Dr Anderson on the one side and Edward Shils on the other in the pages of *Minerva* in 1970—but there is certainly no disagreement on the claim to appropriate consultation. Students have rejected and have persuaded universities to cast aside older notions of *in statu pupillari*; it is not surprising that they should have carried the argument over into broader areas of university governance. It has been fairly said that older notions assigned responsibility to student government only for trifles and left the matters which most affected their lives as students to be dealt with without consultation with them and without their participation. There are important questions to be explored: what are the appropriate areas for participation and consultation? What is the educational value of student participation? What is the impact of participation and consultation upon effective university government? What are the areas of governance which should be reserved to the faculty in the sense that, while there may readily be consultation on principle, decision must ultimately be reserved to the faculty because of the distinctive purposes of the university? The Cambridge report of Lord Devlin observed that ' student participation is new wine and it would be unsafe to receive it in the firm conviction that the old bottles will do '. There is general sympathy now, I believe, for the proposition that students should have a voice in areas of governance in which they have a substantial interest, adequate competence and where they are willing to assume the responsibilities of participation. Whether the formula in a particular case be that of consultation or participation, whether representation or consultation should be at the departmental, faculty or university wide level, there is obvious good sense in the proposition that students can inform the decision making agencies in the university about their experience and desires; they can contribute advice and judgment and give support to innovation. There are many questions which have been discussed so many times: what should be the appropriate constituencies from which student representatives should be drawn, what should be the procedures devised to assure that they contribute freely as individuals to discussion and not under mandate from their constituencies? I believe that the conclusion of the Carnegie Commission on this point is sound when it says that ' students should be involved in governance to the extent—which in some areas can be significant—that they contribute to the quality of decisions and to the overall performance of the campus . . . Students should now be incorporated more fully into the on-going decision making

higher education is seen as a claimant competing with other sectors of education and with other claims, say for funds for health, environment and public transportation, it is inevitable that issues will arise, increasingly, as to what particular institutions may appropriately do or not do, as to what are appropriate objectives, and ultimately as to what are the overall limits and controls to be imposed on the higher education sector. We are now past the time when in Martin Trow's words at the OECD conference, the prevailing mood is 'shaped by the euphoria of an expanding economy'. I believe that there is a general trend towards greater central political direction of the development of higher education arising out of the growing costs and the increased relevance of higher education in so many areas of national life. Post-secondary education has been perceived as having become too important to be left entirely to those who make their lives in the institutions and they, moreover, are by no means the only parties interested in the higher education system which, as the Carnegie Commission put it, is increasingly taking on a public utility status, subject to regulation in the name of public interest. The central issue therefore becomes one of defining how the legitimate concerns of the public with regard to the cost, efficiency and expanded functions of a higher education can be reconciled with the freedom of universities and kindred institutions to maintain their own integrity as institutions committed to teaching, research and learning.

Any proposition that the establishment of co-ordinating machinery will inevitably endanger academic freedom and institutional autonomy should be carefully examined. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are related, but are not, in their central aspects, necessarily synonymous. In its central aspect, academic freedom is that freedom of the academic community which underlies the performance of the functions of teaching and research; it is freedom of inquiry, of competition among ideas, a freedom to speak and to advocate one's own and it may be, unpopular ideas. It is a necessary condition for proper inquiry, for the search for new knowledge and ideas for worthwhile teaching. Institutional autonomy is the liberty of the university to govern itself free of outside controls and it may well be that universities will operate best when given the greatest possible freedom to plan their own courses and programmes, recruit their own staff and students and determine their own lines of development. Most of us would believe, I think, that they operate best this way. Yet it is clear that there are real constraints on university autonomy and a study of relations with the Australian Universities Commission makes this clear. The extent of the impact on academic freedom is the critical question. The real question is not whether

process on campus within the limits of their interest and competence'. This does not answer the question when, where, how, with precision, because, I suspect there are no general, universal answers and we do well to heed the statement of Clark Kerr in his discussion of problems of governance and functions, that area by area, the central question should be, who has an interest in the problem and who has competence to deal with it? The test should be performance, and this practical, pragmatic approach can lead to a series of agreements, area by area, at any point of time.

III

Clark Kerr has written that higher education has become everybody's business: the campus is no longer on the hill with the aristocracy but in the valley with the people. This raises questions with respect to the autonomy of universities, their capacity to make their own judgments about what they will do with the resources available to them, what they will teach and say, and how they will teach and say it and what research they will undertake or decline to undertake.

The Carnegie Commission's report on *Governance of Higher Education* asserts quite baldly that external authorities are exercising more and more authority over higher education and that institutional independence has been declining. It also points out that while autonomy is much demanded in principle, universities seek more and more public financial support and this inevitably leads to some dependence on the grantor, which in Australia is now the central government. The Commission says that the greatest shift in power has taken place not within the campus, but in the *transfer* of authority from the campus to outside agencies. At a recent OECD meeting, the question was put in terms: 'How can we reconcile the legitimate aspirations toward autonomy of individual institutions with a proper concern for the interests of society as a whole?' This poses the question in terms of the claim, on the one side, for institutional autonomy, and on the other of accountability to society and immediately to the paymaster. Higher education has made a heavy demand on public funds in many countries in recent years and this expenditure has increased far more rapidly than expenditure on other sections of education and on most other areas of governmental expenditure on social services. Questions will inevitably be asked about the worth of higher education if unit costs continue to rise, and if the climate of public opinion increasingly questions the policy of continuing growth of higher education. In particular when

there will be interference by the State, but rather whether that inevitable inteference will be confined to appropriate topics and will be expressed through a suitable and sensitive mechanism. This highlights the importance of building up relationships of intimacy understanding and confidence between the designated agencies and the university.

I have referred to the development of collective bargaining processes which are developing in institutions particularly in the United States, and to the warning given that if this develops within a broad ambit, it may have serious implications for university autonomy. It is also the case that the community looks with no great sympathy on universities in disorder, and many of us at times have heard the call to government and sometimes to officers of government to put them right. Clark Kerr warns that the public university in disarray is particularly open to further intrusions by government. Moreover, there is an increasing public interest in how the university community conducts itself. Controversial life styles and demands perceived by the general community to be outlandish lead to pressures to exercise more public authority. On the other side, as the Carnegie Commission points out, the general reduction in the acceptance of authority is reflected in the life and style of the university community. The Commission warns that this generates tensions and may have a significant impact on institutional autonomy.

IV

I have spoken of Sir John Morris's interest in adult education and of his views about what we now call continuing education. In many places there is now a great interest in continuing education, in life-long learning, in the learning society. It was referred to in *Schools in Australia*, the report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission; it is developed in *Open Tertiary Education*, the interim report of the Committee on Open University; it appears quite prominently in the Ontario Report, *The Learning Society*; it is the central theme of the Faure report, *Learning to Be*, a UNESCO report published in 1972. The argument is that learning is a life-long experience: that rapid and complex change, technological and otherwise, requires that it should be so, that increasing leisure invites people throughout their lives to look to a variety of institutions, universities among them, to provide the opportunities for further and diversified study and learning. We have for long assumed that it is necessary to extend the initial period of education and it may well be that we are on a wrong track, that young people become weary of

it and that one of the wellsprings of rebellion is disenchantment with a prolonged period of educational captivity. A recent commentator on the Annan Report on the *University of Essex* says that he suspects that the educational system now goes on far too long for most people. If our assumptions change, if we contemplate a shorter initial and continuous period of education for many followed by return to the institution at various times throughout life, we may well free ourselves of undesirable pressures. If the university is geared, in company with other institutions which would include libraries, museums, art galleries as well as other specifically academic institutions, to providing continuing or life-long education as a significant and integral part of its programme rather than as the peripheral activity suggested in the most recent, Fifth Report of the Australian Universities Commission, it would make a major contribution to the needs of a changing society. Much of the recent discussion on open tertiary education emphasises the provision of learning opportunities throughout life for a variety of people and a variety of interests. The draft report of the Open University Committee does not recommend the establishment of a newly constituted Open University for Australia. It supports the use and the expansion of the use of existing resources—and the University of Queensland is heavily committed—and the development of new resources in other institutions, university and non-university, to provide a range of learning opportunities throughout life. This, I am sure, would have pleased the man we honour through this lecture. I cannot think that all the developments I have chronicled and speculated upon would have pleased him. As I remember him, he was a man of firm views and positions and I do not think that he would have warmed to certain aspects of the contemporary university scene. He died at a time when the world was a rather different place. Change has come upon us with unbelievable rapidity and in the course of the last decade there has been irreversible change, some of which offers little for our comfort.

I am honoured to have been invited to take my place in the line of lecturers who have delivered the Sir John Morris lecture. He was a major figure in the life of his community and I am happy that I should have had the opportunity to know him and on this occasion to pay tribute to his achievement and his service.

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